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Viewing cable 06MEXICO4310, AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH PRESUMED PRESIDENT ELECT

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06MEXICO4310	2006-08-04 13:38	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Mexico

Appears in these articles:

<http://wikileaks.jornada.com.mx/notas/necesario-enviar-energica-senal-de-apoyo-a-calderon>

R 041338Z AUG 06
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2510
INFO ALL US CONSULATES IN MEXICO COLLECTIVE
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS

73752
2006-08-04 13:38:00
06MEXICO4310
Embassy Mexico
CONFIDENTIAL

R 041338Z AUG 06
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2510
INFO ALL US CONSULATES IN MEXICO COLLECTIVE
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 004310

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/03/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MX](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH PRESUMED PRESIDENT ELECT

Classified By: Ambassador Antonio O. Garza Jr for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶11. (C) Summary: Presumed President-elect Felipe Calderon told the Ambassador 8/2 that he thought the Electoral Tribunal could decide as early as this week to recount a certain number of ballots, a gesture Calderon thought was reasonable in light of the ongoing Democratic Revolution Party (PRD) protests in Mexico City. A final certification of the presidential election could take until late August, he speculated. Calderon said his role was to be patient and prepare himself for the presidency. He planned to attend President Uribe's inauguration in Colombia, but also looked forward to an early visit to the United States, perhaps including some cities with large migrant populations.

Calderon is looking to engage on a broad agenda with the U.S. and to avoid the trap of making migration the dominant bilateral issue. Calderon's comments led us to believe his transition planning is in the very early stages. He dropped one comment that indicated he has not been in close contact with President Fox since the election. End Summary.

The Waiting Game

¶12. (C) Presumed President-elect Felipe Calderon requested the 8/2 meeting with the Ambassador, primarily to express thanks for President Bush's early and friendly congratulatory call. (Note: Calderon met 8/1 with the Spanish Ambassador, and expected to meet with the ambassadors of other countries offering congratulations in the course of the week).

Calderon expressed his regret about the ongoing PRD protests (which have blocked key arteries leading to the Embassy's neighborhood) and some frustration that PRD candidate Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO) was refusing to acknowledge defeat. While his situation was difficult, Calderon said, every day he was more convinced a few weeks of patience was better than just one day with AMLO in Los Pinos. Calderon's tracking polls indicated that on a daily basis AMLO was losing support and Calderon was gaining. The PRD's attacks on election institutions had done some damage, but as AMLO became increasingly inconsiderate and obstructive the institutions regained credibility.

¶13. (C) Calderon reported there were some indications that the Electoral Tribunal could make a preliminary ruling this Friday that would allow for a recount of some ballot boxes in areas where the results were extremely close, or where the law permitted a recounting of the ballots. He estimated that some 6,000-8,000 ballot boxes could be recounted under this ruling (there are a maximum of 750 votes per ballot box). The recount could begin immediately, with results available within a matter of days. Calderon's expectation was that the recount results would not vary dramatically from those originally reported. This would be enough to satisfy some in the PRD and broader public who were calling for a recount, Calderon surmised, but probably not AMLO. The Tribunal could make its final certification of the election results in late August, but AMLO could continue protests (although not necessarily his occupation of Paseo de la Reforma) through President Fox's annual report to Congress (September 2) and inauguration day (December 1) -- or beyond.

Transition

¶14. (C) Calderon stressed his willingness to work collaboratively with the U.S. on a broad range of issues, and did not want to get stuck in a single-issue debate on migration. He expected to differentiate his Administration from that of President Fox, but at this meeting didn't provide many specifics. Calderon planned to attend Colombian President Uribe's inauguration in Colombia next week, and was considering a trip to U.S. cities with large migrant populations, starting with Los Angeles. He acknowledged the Ambassador's point that such travel should be scheduled with careful attention to U.S. electoral calendar and the debate on migration. Once Calderon's election was certified, he hoped as well to meet President Bush and senior U.S.

officials. While the Ambassador pressed for details on transition priorities and personalities, Calderon wasn't particularly forthcoming, suggesting his transition planning is still in its early stages. The Ambassador stressed that we were looking forward to a close working relationship with the Calderon team as soon as they were ready.

Region

¶5. (C) Calderon volunteered his concern over the role Chavez was playing in the region, while noting that Castro's sudden absence from the scene -- be it permanent or temporary -- offered an opportunity to undermine Chavez' role. Calderon said he understood Chavez was increasingly active in Mexico. Calderon international affairs adviser Arturo Sarrukhan stated that Castro had duodenal cancer and was likely in the final stages. All agreed it was an unprecedented situation leading to a probable transition. The Ambassador pointed out that the region should not permit a Castro-Castro succession scenario to be considered legitimate.

¶6. (C) Sarrukhan separately stated that one reason Calderon had agreed to go to Colombia was to consult with the GOC on the increasing ties between Colombian and Mexican narcotics traffickers. During his attendance at Garcia's inauguration in Peru, Sarrukhan said, Peruvian leaders had also stressed their concern that Mexican traffickers were playing a larger role in the Andes generally. Calderon was extremely concerned about the damage the cartels were doing to Mexico, and wanted to take strong measures against them.

Comment

¶7. (C) Comment: Calderon was convinced he won legitimately and resigned to waiting out the Electoral Tribunal's ratification of his election -- an outcome he did not appear to doubt. He appeared in a paid announcement on national television the evening of August 2 to stress his conviction that election institutions had acted appropriately and that his victory should be recognized. Calderon let slip a comment that it was hard for him to reach President Fox -- an indication that the two are not working closely together during this period of uncertainty.

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GARZA